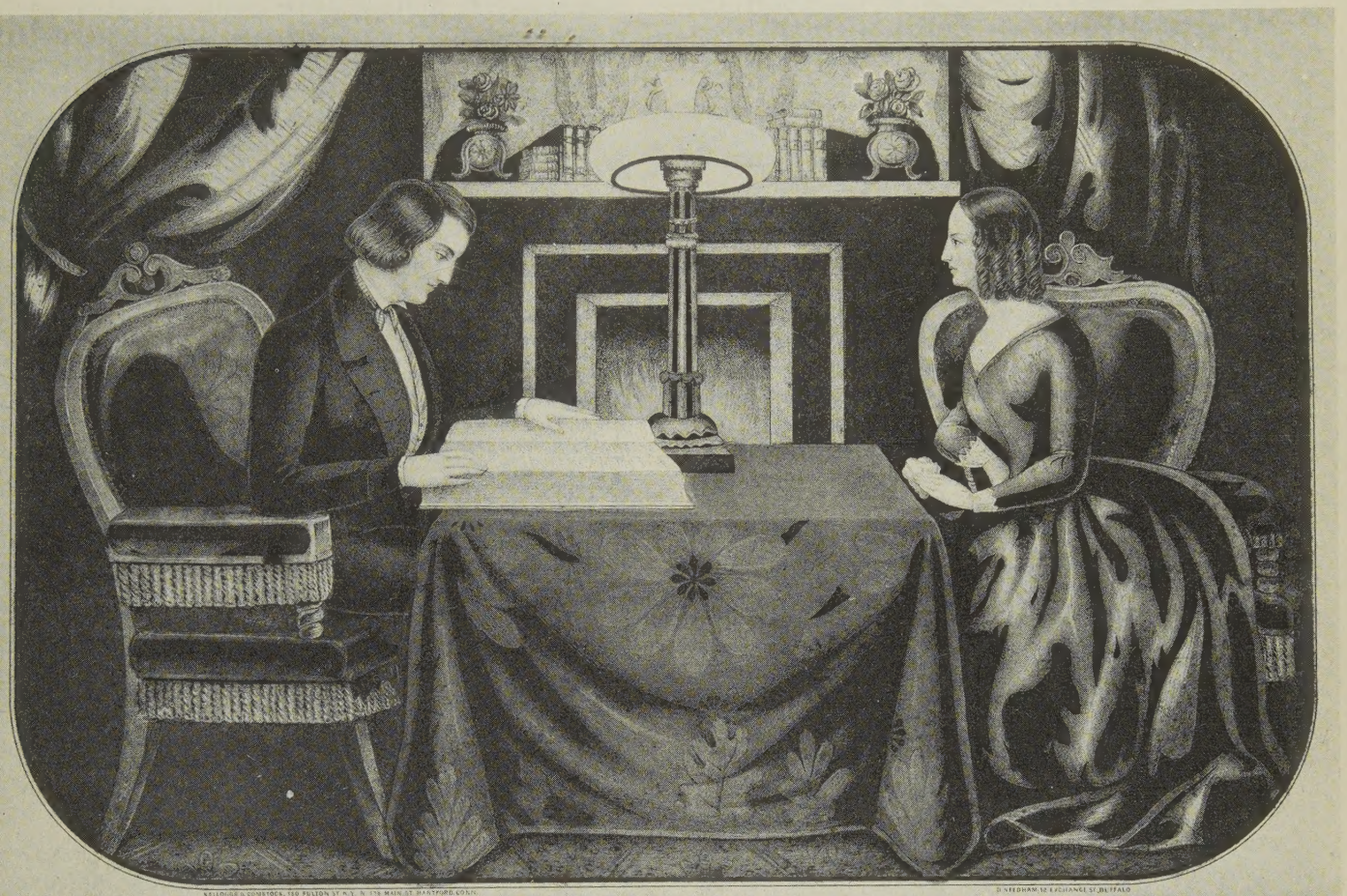
The Congregationalist



READING THE SCRIPTURES.

Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me John 5:39

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VOLUME 4 MAY, 1961 NUMBER 5

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

THE SHAME OF CONGREGATIONALISM

Harry R. Butman, D.D., Los Angeles, California

Congregationalism a Sin?

One who is deeply persuaded of the worth and Scriptural basis of Congregationalism can hardly avoid being puzzled and saddened by the mood and doctrine of pro-merger people, both lay and clerical. Across the years, by dint of ecclesiastical office and control of theological education, those who believe in the One Great Church have succeeded in convincing a disturbingly large number of Congregationalists that there is something shameful in their Way. To be sure, no official of our denomination has directly said, "Congregationalism is a sin." The charge is more general and diffuse than that: denominationalism is the sin and scandal. But while the honest boldness to say that Congregationalism is a sin is lacking, there is present the clear inference that loyalty to it is a shameful thing. Many Congregational men and women are vaguely guilty because they have been repeatedly told by prominent men, by the printed word and *viva voce,* that they ought to be ashamed and penitent.

As I have debated the merger I have noted the recurrence of one question, usually put in a tone of latent passion and impatience, "When are you going to stop all this fighting and get back to the real business of the Church?" The questioner implies that there is something spiritually wrong with the man who defends a Way of Church life which our officials have told us is outmoded and offensive. I have personally come to a place where my answer to this question is a counter-question, "When are you going to stop pushing for structural merger on a national level at the cost of bitterness and division in the local Church?" We Congregationalists greatly err when we let such questioners put us on the defensive. Since to us Congregationalism is not a shame, but a glory, let us boldly defend it and preach it.

A Lesson From The Past

About a century and a quarter ago Congregationalism faced such a moment of truth as it now faces. The ill-starred Plan of Union, whereby the Connecticut General Association virtually gave all the United States west of the Hudson to the Presbyterians in a merger similar to the one now proposed, had the good result of re-awakening dormant interest in the Congregational idea. In that rare volume, "A View of Congregationalism," the author, George Punchard, points out reasons for the decline of Congregationalism in the first third of the 19th century. One reason was the indifference of theological professors, and Punchard shrewdly concludes, "But if the Professors of any of our Theological seminaries are even *apparently* indifferent to our church polity, we need not be surprised to find their pupils *really* so." A second reason, he notes, is "the neglect of pastors to preach upon this subject." Both of these causes of decline have been evidenced in the first third of the 20th century, and with the same results. And one of these results has been the imposition of an uneasy sense of shame for being a loyal Congregationalist.

Others Are Proud — Why Are We Not?

In refreshing contrast stands the commendable zeal of Episcopalians in promoting their polity. This Winter I chanced to be in the Midwest and I was invited to dine at the home of an industrialist, now retired, but once a man of deservedly high place. We talked for some two hours before dinner and I was much impressed by his powerful personality and his deep quick insights. But what impressed me even more was his frank pride at being a vestryman, and his open, even aggressive championship of holy orders and the historic episcopate. Also a dinner guest was the Bishop of that state, a man whose grandfather had been one of the most scholarly and beloved of Massachusetts Congregationalists. The Bishop was a man of intelligence, scholarship, personal charm and true piety; he loved his Church and was not ashamed of it. In the drawing room later he said to me, "The mind of Christ is to be found in polity." He then lucidly and eloquently stated his conviction that the Episcopal Church had the finest form of government — a statement about which, needless to say, as a battle-scarred Free Churchman I was able to restrain my enthusiasm with no visible display of effort. Yet as I listened to these men, I could understand the reason for the rapid growth of Episcopalianism in the United States. They truly believed in their religious system, understood it, boldly proclaimed it, proselyted for it in splendid contrast with many timid Congregationalists who know little about their Way, and for shame's sake can speak no good word for it.

Had our denomination been led, in the past twenty-five years, by men who believed in the splendor and worth of Congregationalism as these men believe in Episcopalianism, whole-heartedly, unequivocally, ardently, our fellowship would have matched the fine and deserved advance of Episcopalianism. But all is not lost, for God is raising up a generation of men and women who are not ashamed of their Congregational Way, and count it a glory.

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MORE E. AND R. QUESTIONS

Since the sending of a letter dated March 8, 1961, by Rev. William L. Rest, President of the North Illinois Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, to all pastors in that denomination and to some Congregational Christian leaders (see THE CONGREGATIONALIST, April 1961, page 3, column 2), two letters have been written by Dr. John L. Schmidt, President of the South Illinois Synod, which indicate even further the dissatisfaction of many E and R leaders with the Constitution as approved last July by the General Synod meeting in Cleveland, and show that some of them are ready and anxious to amend the Constitution in a way that they were unable to get it amended last July in Cleveland.

On March 9, 1961, Dr. Schmidt wrote to his fellow Synod-Presidents a significant letter, which lists among his other reasons for being disturbed: "The state of the continuing litigation by the anti-union forces." "As I understand it," he writes, "it has not been determined that all the present complaints were adjudicated in the Cadman Case of some years ago. It is possible that the decision will be that some of the complaints were not covered. If that proves to be true there will be another trial and the outcome of that trial is something no one can predict with any certainty. Thus it would seem to me that there is as much reason for extending the time of the so-called 'Structures Resolution' as there was for adopting it in the first place."

He refers also to a meeting of representatives of four states bordering on Lake Michigan "to study the resources and needs" of this area, which Dr. Rest had criticized saying, "Here one Board (The Board of Homeland Ministries) begins to implement the idea of regionalism without regard to the Conference structure which does not exist."

Dr. Schmidt, stating that he had attended that meeting and had asked what would happen if *all* groups should decide to set up their own region and that when he "suggested that we would do better to work on Regionalism on the denominational level, both the question and the suggestion were all but ignored." He adds, "I am not prepared to support a system in which 'every Board does that which is right in its own eyes.' Far better that the Church have some real power to 'define and regulate' its Boards. The alternative is confusion worse confounded."

More Positive Statements

In his second letter, dated March 20, Dr. Schmidt reaffirms his concern about the realities of the legal situation, and goes on with further statements, including the following.

"I am concerned with the fact that the vast majority of the people with whom I have spoken do not *really* approve the proposed Constitution and honestly feel that the suggestions from various Synods for changes were not given sufficiently serious consideration at the adjourned meeting of General Synod last July, with the result that most of our objectives of a year ago still stand.

"Since I was personally involved I most vividly remember one example of perhaps many that could be given. At one point I arose and asked for clarifications of the 'now or at any future time' phrase in Paragraph 21. Previously I had heard one leader tell a group of C.C. people that it *meant everything;* that it was their guarantee against any future amendment that would restrict the complete autonomy of the local church. But within 20 hours I heard another leader tell a group of E and R people that it *meant 'nothing at all.'* I simply wanted to know the facts. I was told 'It means what it says.' Then I suggested that the right of each local church to write its own covenant or confession of faith be amended by the addition of the words 'consistent with the provisions of Article IV, Paragraph 8,' making it Trinitarian. Whereupon two things happened. One delegate arose and shouted: 'Do you want a merger? Then lay off Paragraph 21,' and one of our most trusted leaders, in the most gracious and kindest possible manner administered a rebuke that, as I heard from various sources later, caused others to lose their courage, to give up and say, 'What's the use?' I am sure this was not the intent, but it was the effect."

How Many C. C. Churches?

Equally striking is the concern which Dr. Schmidt shows about the voting in the C.C. Churches. "At the time of our Synod meetings," says he, "we will not have a very good idea. The latest report in the UNITED CHURCH HERALD shows that 1901 of some 5500 have voted to approve. This is something like 36% or slightly over one-third. One of the C.C. Executives once told me that the 'bulk' of the voting would be done in the annual meetings in January. Does this mean that we are uniting with only half the fellowship (all of which has been having representation at our General Synods) and that what we are doing is not formally uniting with but *actually dividing one of the communions concerned?* If so, can we call this an answer to the oft-quoted prayer of our Lord?"

In referring to the advice given to "take counsel not of our fears but of our faith," Dr. Schmidt says "I believe we should take counsel of our faith in the processes by which the affairs of our Church have been ordered in the past. That is, the synods take action, through overtures, petitions, resolutions, etc., which become the basis of discussion and decision on the part of the General Synod."

In concluding the letter, Dr. Schmidt says that as a result of the advice of a nationally respected leader, he is recommending to the South Illinois Synod that approval be not given at this time. Among the reasons he will give for that resolution is to "give us time to learn whether this is a union with the Congregational Christian fellowship or with a minority of their churches so splitting a fellowship which already exists". If this or a similar resolution is passed by at least 12 Synods, the Constitution cannot be declared in effect for at least another year.

WOMEN'S WORK

MRS. ROBERT E. COLLINS, Chairman
1014 FLORAL DRIVE, S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

SPONSORING A REFUGEE FAMILY

Mrs. Robert A. Heinz, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Our church has had a wonderful experience which we would like to share with you. We sponsored a refugee family! But let's start at the beginning.

Five representatives, three from the Woman's League, studied three dossiers procured through the Congregational Christian Service Committee, Inc., an agent of Church World Service, 100 E. 29th Street, New York 16, New York. All of the families were Indonesian, some of the fifty thousand repatriated to Holland in 1957.

These dossiers were much travelled, showing they had been in many hands, but there was one family that stood out in appeal to us. They were young, they had four children and the father was skilled. We were responsible for finding housing, giving them the bare necessities of living, and finding a position for the father. It would cost us nothing. Their transportation was paid mostly by the Dutch Government, the family paying the rest.

So we applied for the Van Sliedrecht family: Rudi, 37; Kiki, 29; Edward, 9; Willy, 8; Ellen, 6; and Ray, 4. They were living about one hundred miles from Amsterdam where Rudi was employed three days a week as an airplane mechanic. We wrote to them and were delighted to find they could speak and write English. Relatives of one of our members were travelling in Europe, and we asked them to get in touch with Rudi, which they did, sending back glowing reports.

Preparing for The Newcomers

It seemed like an endless wait, but finally we heard they were to arrive February first. Such feverish activity! We had made a number of contacts for possible jobs for Rudi, learning his probable starting salary, which helped determine the approximate rent we should pay. We found a very suitable upper flat and the church paid the rent for five weeks and put in enough fuel for three months, as its gift.

Now to furnish the home! To expedite matters, and so we wouldn't be accepting duplicates, we divided the rooms: One committee woman was to take all calls for furnishings for living room, dining room and kitchen; and another was to accept furnishings for the three bedrooms, bath and laundry. First call was accepted. We had made lists of the "bare necessities" of each room . . . but how those phones did ring!

Moving day arrived, and two long-suffering husbands borrowed trucks and with the help of the Pilgrim Fellowship boys made forty-two stops to pick up the donations of odds and ends of furniture. More church people were on hand to unload the trucks and generally help out. The P. F. girls worked in the house, cleaning the furniture as it came in, washing kitchen walls, etc. By late afternoon, everything was in readiness, even to the beds being made, plants potted and toys in the closets. It was amazing! A mattress from one home, the spring from another and the head-board from still another; a night stand that matched a bed, chairs that blended with the davenport, choice of drapes, a dining table but no chairs. (A couple went home and dug chairs from their attic which they recovered that night and brought over the next morning.) Perfect! The gas man who came to hook up the range stayed to help lay the kitchen linoleum before going on to his next "emergency."

"The Van Sliedrechts"

The Sunday School children brought all the food, planned for variety; each class being assigned one category. February 1st and our completion of the project coincided. We were privileged to meet the family at the airport, and an exciting time it was! We were as nervous as new fathers. As we drove back into town and up in front of their home we had prepared . . . to us it looked dingy, dark and old, but Kiki said: "This is ours? It is beautiful."

When we entered the living room, Kiki had her face buried in Rudi's coat, crying, and tears were running down Rudi's face as he said: "You did this all for us? Why? All our lives we have had things taken away. We have never had anything given to us." There wasn't a dry eye among us.

I tell you this story because we feel that what has happened to this family has united our church even more; it has taught our children compassion, giving,

Continued on page 5

the true meaning of missions. We are awaiting the dossiers on other families. We have had a wonderful experience!

PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN TO MEET MAY 6

Plans are well under way for the Women's Meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Continuing Congregational Churches, to be held in Wilkes-Barre on Saturday, May 6. Mrs. Katherine Goodyear of McKeesport urges the women of the Churches to charter busses and otherwise plan transportation to the meeting.

After calling attention to the various undertakings of the Women's Project, including Piedmont College and the new Church at Anchorage, Alaska, Mrs. Goodyear adds in her letter to the women's organizations, "I know you are all working hard in your individual churches and I shall expect to see all of you at the Spring meeting. Come prepared to share your ideas with others. May God guide our working together."

Women in other states will do well to take courage and inspiration from what those of the Keystone State are doing. The Commission on Women's Work of the National Association will be glad to offer any information desired and to pass along to others the reports of accomplishments, and suggestions as to how women's work can be helpful in our cause of freedom in religion.

NEWS NOTES

Anaheim Church Prepares To Build. The Congregational Church of Anaheim, California, has successfully met the requirements of the city for obtaining a special use permit to build its first unit. The architect is at work on plans, and it is hoped that construction will be started late in the Spring or early in the Summer.

New Member Churches. The Chicopee Falls (Massachusetts) Congregational Church and the Frankfort (Michigan) Congregational Church have voted to join the National Association.

Church Conference For the Blind. The National Church Conference for the Blind will hold its annual meeting July 24-27 in St. Louis. Full information may be obtained by writing to the Conference at P.O. Box 6999, Fort Worth 15, Texas.

Religion and Psychiatry Seminar. The American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry will hold its Tenth Anniversary Summer Seminar on Pastoral Care, June 4-9. The subject will be "Love, Sin and Punishment in Modern Religious Practice." Brochure and application card may be obtained by ministers by writing to the Foundation at 3 West 29th Street, New York 1, New York.

New Youth Assistant at Pomona. Mr. George Blaisdell, a junior at Los Angeles State College, majoring in Religion, has been engaged as Youth Assistant at Pilgrim Church, Pomona, California.

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

A Pelican paperback history of the Church in five volumes is now in the process of being made available to the general public. Professor G. R. Cragg of Andover Newton, old oldest Congregational seminary, has just issued his volume on "The Church and The Age Of Reason (1648-1789)." One can expect studies of the early, medieval, Reformation and modern periods of Christian history to complete the total picture of the Church in action.

Dr. Cragg gives a balanced and well-written treatment of an age caught between revolutions of the most drastic nature. The Reformation had spent its course and the French Revolution was to come. Some looked rather longingly for peace after struggle; others were sowing the seeds for a whirlwind. Our author fortunately combines appreciation for his material and a large measure of objective detachment in his evaluations.

Certain commendable features deserve mention. Dr. Cragg gives us information about the state of the Churches in such overlooked places as Portugal, Paraguay and Canada. He summarizes the situation in Russia and the Near East. His chapter on art and architecture gives new perspective to the usual books about doctrines, missions, ecclesiastical leaders and their opponents. He also relates the general philosophical temper of the times to the work of organized Christianity. In these and other ways his book reaches several notches higher than the usual textbooks.

Experts in specific phases of this period will undoubtedly find fault. I personally felt that the true genius of British and American Congregationalism did not receive adequate description. Others would undoubtedly feel the same about their special interests and loyalties. All of which suggests that the author has tried to be fair with everyone and prejudicial to none. To a remarkable extent in an age of propaganda, Professor Cragg remains an historian. THE CHURCH AND THE AGE OF REASON. (*Pelican Books, $1.25.*)

In Memoriam

Three loyal Congregational laymen have died since our last issue. Mr. Clarence G. Wadhams of Torrington, Connecticut, had been a staunch supporter of the Congregational Way, and was one of the organizers of the Connecticut Congregational Fellowship. Mr. Sidney V. Holt of Oneida, Illinois, active in the work of continuing Congregationalism in that state, died on March 21. His efforts in circulating THE CONGREGATIONALIST and other literature have helped greatly in the work. Mr. William W. Ollendorff of West Medway, Massachusetts, who died on April 3, aged 84, was one of the original organizers and for several years served as Treasurer of the Massachusetts Continuation Committee. These three men will be greatly missed in the meetings of loyal Congregationalists, but "their works do follow them."

OPERATION SPARKPLUG

National Association Churches and their friends may well take pride in the work which received such substantial help as a result of the gifts sent to the Near East Foundation, as promised at the 1959 annual meeting at Los Angeles. This fund has been devoted especially to the Rural Resources Development Program for Jordan. The First Annual Report on this project, written by Mr. Delmer J. Dooley, Area Director, shows how much has been accomplished in a short time.

In a country about the size of the state of Indiana, most of the area is desert, with about five to seven percent under cultivation. The lands are divided into arid desert plains, semi-arid plains, highland areas, and the Jordan Valley itself. The last two comprise most of the agricultural production and future potential.

The one and a half million inhabitants are fairly evenly divided between the original inhabitants of Trans-Jordan, the inhabitants of former Palestine, and the Palestine refugees. About 85 percent are engaged in agriculture, mostly small farms of from 4 to 40 acres each.

"I will plant in the wilderness the cedar."
— Isaiah 41:19

On the West Bank of the Jordan agricultural conditions are better than on the East Bank, the farmers being more settled and the land producing more intensively. Much of the rural area follows the difficult life of subsistence farming. The average farmer's income has been from $300.00 to $400.00 annually.

Into this land the Near East Foundation has sent technicians, and three projects out of some twenty-five proposals were found suitable to meet the requirements for successful development. Efforts are being made (1), to introduce and demonstrate agricultural and husbandry practices which will improve productivity; (2) work with the basic economic unit, the farm family and village life; (3) direct the program on improvements in the farmer's economic position; (4) make the improvements as simple and practical as possible with the resources at hand; (5) begin on a modest scale and allow for expansion; and (6), utilize as fully as possible the rural services available and develop a permanent program under community or government supervision.

Six villages were selected on each bank of the Jordan, and five farmers chosen from each, who were owners of at least one and a half acres suitable for fruit production. Each farmer agreed to cooperate with and follow the technical directions of the horticulturist or supervisor. These agreements were signed in the Fall of 1960, and by January, 1961, the sixty farmers had completed the planting of 2,500 olive trees, 16,080 grafted grape vines, 2,210 apple seedlings and 13,000 forestry trees. The demonstration orchards and vineyards will serve as "Islands of Agricultural Improvement and Progress," which can be observed and duplicated by other farmers. It is a demonstrated pattern by which they can see, judge, and help themselves to improve their lands further.

Village Poultry Improvement Program

Poultry keeping is a part of the capital resource of most rural families. The local chickens are often unprofitable producers. A Central Poultry Center was established, with plans for a hatchery building, a laying house, and a feed storage warehouse. By December these buildings were completed. Three thousand baby chicks of the Leghorn and New Hampshire breeds were imported from Holland, and a large, modern all-electric incubator was also shipped from that country. With the cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture other equipment was installed and the Veterinary Department, Public Works Department, Poultry Husbandry Department, construction engineers, contractors and supervisors also cooperated. 561 improved cockerels were distributed in 19 villages, and these villages will receive priority attention in the distribution of baby chicks.

Livestock Improvement Project

The third project was to improve the dairy cattle of Jordan. Severe drought had depleted the cattle population. This created a favorable opportunity to present an improved dairy breeding program. No new dairy bloodlines had been introduced in Jordan for many years, and this became a part of the project. Improvement of dairy cattle through selected, proven dairy sires, improvement through up-grading with Holstein, Damascus and Jersey bulls, and improvement of milk production and calf crops have been aimed at the improvement of the chronic milk shortage in the land.

A central barn has been erected, and arrangements made with a major cattle exporting company in Holland to send a representative to Jordan. Two registered Holstein bulls have been purchased and have arrived, and a technician is in charge of the artificial insemination project. A similar program with goats, the characteristic dairy animals of Jordan, is now under consideration. This will mean great improvement in the milk supply for families of the region.

Thus the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches in the United States is helping to make an arid Bedouin area yield a rich harvest. The harvest will be found not only in the products of vineyard and field, but even more in bringing a better life to thousands of dwellers in a land adjacent to that of the Bible.

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Carl M. Gates, Claremont, California

Theme for the Month: Lighting up the Commonplace
Suggested Readings: John 21:1-13 and Luke 24:13-35

The disciples were caught in what modern phraseology calls "The post-Easter slump." Jesus had appeared to them, and called them to high and glorious service for him and the world. Yet day after day passed by and nothing happened. They were perplexed and taut with the strain of suspense. What were they supposed to do? Where was the Master whom they were counting on to lead them?

Finally Peter's patience snapped. "I am going fishing," he said. Back to the old job that he understood and could handle! And it was while he was busy with the old familiar tasks that Jesus appeared to him again. The disciples had expected something new and spectacular, and here came an assurance that the risen Christ was with them in the midst of their commonplace work. The new duties to which he was calling them could be done in various ways; the essential thing was that everything should be done in the Master's spirit and with the strength gained from his indwelling presence.

Carlyle grasped the meaning of the lesson: "All true work is sacred; in all true work, were it but true hand labor, there is something of divineness." The risen Master was as close to his friends while they were fishing, as when they were gathered in the evening in the upper room for worship. He could now be with them always and everywhere, no matter what they were doing. That was the meaning of Easter, and they were just beginning to learn it.

The two unknown disciples on the road to Emmaus learned it in another way. They were lifted up out of their mood of disillusionment by the wonderful words of a stranger who walked with them along the road. Their hearts burned within them as a new understanding dawned upon them of the real meaning of Jesus' life. They could not grasp it all, but it was as if their eyes had been opened to a new world. And then, as they sat together around the table, Jesus was known of them in the breaking of the bread. The Master whom they had lost was still with them as they walked and talked and ate together.

Easter Day was past; the Easter experience was still vivid and was to remain so throughout their lives. Fear, disillusionment, defeat were gone, because Jesus had taught them that they, too, could share his eternal life of joy and strength and triumph.

Prayer: O Lord God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, open our eyes that we may behold Thy Fatherly presence ever about us. Draw our hearts to Thee with the power of Thy love. Teach us to be anxious for nothing; and when we have done what Thou hast given us to do, help us, O God, our Saviour, to leave the issue to Thy wisdom. Take from us all doubt and mistrust. Lift our thoughts up to Thee in heaven; and make us to know that all things are possible to us through Thy Son, our Redeemer. Amen.

(*Bishop Westcott*)

MEETINGS EAST AND WEST

Massachusetts

In spite of fog and a downpour of rain, Congregationalists from at least sixteen Massachusetts Churches gathered on Saturday afternoon February 25 in the Winthrop Church of Holbrook. Mr. Sydney G. Abbot of Westford brought words of welcome from the Massachusetts Continuation Committee, and Rev. Harvey L. Pierce, pastor of the Church, led in prayer.

The rally of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship held the previous weekend at Wachogue Community Congregational Church, Springfield, was ably reported by Miss Donna Lee Porter of Holbrook. Greetings from the North Berkshire Continuation Committee were brought by Mr. Murray D. Smith of Williamstown, who told of the work of that Committee as Massachusetts Distribution Center in sending out pro-Congregational literature throughout the state. Greetings from New Hampshire were brought by Mr. George Wright of Hollis.

A discussion on what Churches which have voted not to enter the United Church of Christ can do in fellowship was led by Rev. Joseph J. Russell, Eastern Field Representative of the National Association. The desirability of having a Massachusetts Fellowship was stressed, and suggestions made as to how this could be organized.

The work of the National Association in Christian Education was reported by Rev. George W. Brown, Jr., of Fall River, and the opportunity for missionary service through the Missionary Society affiliated with the National Association was described.

An inspiring talk on the energetic way in which the laymen of Central Church, Middleboro, had alerted the members of that Church to vote to remain Congregational was given by Mr. Albert A. Thomas of that Church, and Rev. Curtis C. Busby of Essex reported progress in arranging a TV debate on the merger issue over Station WNAC-TV, Boston. Mrs. Sydney G. Abbot commented on the provision in the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, "no person shall be made a member of a religious society without his written consent," and in view of this raised the question whether a Congregationalist could be made a member of the United Church of Christ against his will.

California

On February 19 the Congregational Club of Southern California met in McKenna Hall of Claremont Men's College to hear Dr. Matthew Spinka, noted professor of Church History, review his book "The Quest For Church Unity." In this book Dr. Spinka traces the Ecumenical Movement as it has developed over the years. He contrasts the "federalist" idea of union with the "One Church" plan. He concludes with the assertion that unity is a *spiritual* fact, the Church Invisible, a voluntary cooperation but not an enforced uniformity in a vast union.

Following Dr. Spinka's address, Mrs. Veylard Ferrand, a member of the Commission on Women's Work of the National Association, gave a stimulating report on the activity and progress of that organization. The next meeting will be held at Pilgrim Church, Pomona, on April 30.

CHURCH EXTENSION

A New Michigan Church

Howard C. Tuttle, Birmingham, Michigan

Eight years ago in the suburban community of Birmingham, Michigan, 18 miles north of Detroit, 41 like-minded persons signed a covenant establishing themselves as the Congregational Church of Birmingham. This church, like the community, flourished and grew. Led in their worship services and in their other activities by highly personable and competent ministers, members of the congregation developed Christian goals prayerfully and worked toward those goals with dedication and zeal.

Five months ago, however, eight of the original founding members met with another 39 persons and determined to establish a new Congregational Christian church in the vicinity of Birmingham. They made this decision because, on the question of affiliation with the United Church of Christ, about 60 per cent of the membership of the Congregational Church of Birmingham had voted to affiliate.

It would serve no useful purpose to recount the nature of the efforts of the members who opposed affiliation or to those who favored it. The Church's Moderator and its affiliation study committee made every possible attempt to maintain neutrality. Two congregational meetings were given over to excellent presentations by proponents of each side of the question. A secret ballot was taken, the voting lasting throughout a two-week period so that a nearly complete membership vote could be cast.

A New Church Results

With the decision of the Birmingham Church to join the United Church of Christ came the equally important decision by a number of its members to establish a new Church. Since January 8 when the new Pilgrim Congregational Church of Birmingham held its first worship service with 64 adults and 14 children in attendance, its members have found ample answer to the question of the status of a Congregational Church which elects not to accept the United Church's Constitution. We have discovered a great sense of Christian concern for us from Congregationalists and from ministers and laymen in many other denominations. We have found also a new kind of fellowship among ourselves and with others.

On our first Sunday in an attractive builders' supply showroom, the wife of a minister from a nearby Congregational Church appeared with the altar decorations their Church had first used. A cross, a pair of candlesticks, and an altar drape converted a wrought iron table into our altar. The words to familiar hymns were mimeographed. An electronic organ was loaned by a nearby store.

Rapid Progress

Our speakers have been both laymen and ministers. These have included representatives from the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, the Detroit Roundtable of the National Council of Christians and Jews, and the Detroit Council of Churches. Among the many persons providing special help throughout the organizational period are Dr. Alfred D. Grey, acting pastor of Pine Hill Congregational Church, Orchard Lake; Dr. George V. Bohman, Royal Oak, former Moderator of the National Association; and Dr. John D. Rose, minister, Community Congregational Church, Lathrup Village.

"69 Members Sign Covenant"

Our women have been invited to participate in the Women's Fellowships of two nearby Churches until our own circles can be established.

A Pilgrim Fellowship of 12 teenagers has been organized. Our Sunday School now is serving about 29 children ranging in age from 1½ to 12 years.

Spacious Temporary Quarters

From our original temporary quarters, we have moved into our city's more spacious Community House where our Church may be able to hold its worship services until we can build a permanent sanctuary. We have acquired possessions: a lectern, hand-made and hand-finished; an altar Bible; hymnals; all contributed. Pledges for an operating budget of more than $5000 for 1961 have been made, and additional "capital fund" pledges in excess of $6000 have come in from Church families.

Needing an interim or permanent minister, and a permanent church home, we are determined to get both as quickly as possible.

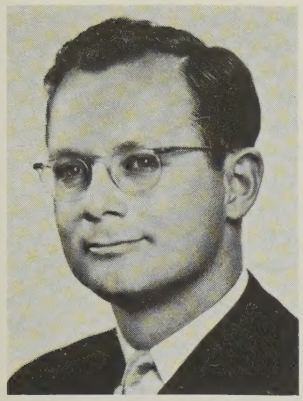
Calling a minister is taking top priority, but we feel also that we are limited in our ability to grow until we can establish ourselves in a particular section of the Birmingham area. With numerous substantial Churches of all major denominations here, we feel it

Continued on page 9

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

For the Loyal Churches



By the time you read this, most of the voting in regard to participation in the United Church of Christ will have been completed. This does not mean that all of the problems have been solved. I would like to talk briefly about two problems which remain.

For Churches which have decided to continue as Congregational Churches outside of the United Church, there is the problem of what type of fellowship relationship they will have with other Congregational Churches. There are some who may want to experiment with a "fellowship" connection with Associations of the United Church — not actually joining but participating in meetings. There are some who may prefer to be related to regional groupings with no connection with any national organization. There are some who will want a closer connection with Churches which share their theological point of view.

But it is my hope that a large percentage of such Churches will decide to join the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. We have already developed an effective program in many areas of church life, and we intend to move creatively into other areas. We will be concerned to develop a constructive response to the needs of our member-Churches and the communities which they serve.

If your Church has decided to stay out of the United Church, perhaps the National Association is the organization with which it should be related. Why don't you write to me at 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin for further information about our group?

For Congregational Individuals — A Fellowship

The second problem to which I would speak is the question being asked by so many individuals, "My Church has voted to become a member of the United Church of Christ, but I want to maintain some connection with the Congregational Way. What can I do?" I want to announce to such people that there will be an effective means for them to keep up their contacts with Congregational people and Congregational activities.

During the first week of June, 1961, a new organization for individuals will be started. It will be called the National Congregational Fellowship. It will be independent of any existing group. Its purpose will be to provide fellowship for Congregational people who want to keep in touch with the Congregational Way. This National Congregational Fellowship will distribute a quarterly newsletter. It will sponsor national and regional meetings. Wherever practical, it will encourage the development of local Congregational Clubs.

Judging from the concerns expressed by so many people in letters to our office, this National Congregational Fellowship will meet a widespread need. It is probable that the charter membership rolls of this new organization will be held open until December 31, 1961. If this is an idea which interests you, then be on the alert for the announcement of the launching of the National Congregational Fellowship.

PROGRESS AT FOURTH CHURCH, CHICAGO

Volunteer workers have accomplished a great deal in renovating and redecorating the Sunday School rooms and halls of the Fourth Congregational Church, North Talman Avenue, Chicago. On February 11 twenty workers were served a roast turkey dinner by Rev. and Mrs. Edward F. White, with the help of a lady in the Church. Each Saturday meals have been provided for the workers by the Sunday School teachers, who have also paid much of the cost of the paint and supplies.

CHURCH EXTENSION — *Continued*

important that we put down permanent roots through purchase of a church site and construction of a building as quickly as possible. Negotiations for the site already have begun.

An Unusual Church

We are told that at this moment we are an unusual Church, that our actions are being watched closely in Congregational and United Church circles. If only for this reason, we take some pride in the fact that on March 5th, 69 of us signed the Salem Covenant as founding members of the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Birmingham.

Of infinitely more significance than our uniqueness, however, is our determination that service to God and to others will be a requirement for membership in our Church, and our determination that the only authority taking precedence over our local Church's autonomy will be God's dictates as these are revealed to us.

As every person who has been a founding member of a new Church knows, it is an exhilarating experience. Paul's words to members of the Churches he helped establish take on personal meaning and immediacy to us. Christ's promise that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" rings in our ears.

We are finding that we have had to re-examine our faith and determine our willingness to give up some comfort and complacency. We are finding, too, that losing the structure that we once called "our church" is far easier to bear than was the danger of losing what to us is a vital principle — our untrammeled Congregationalism.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Miss Marilyn Heaney, *Secretary*
Box 1003, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

Western Pennsylvania District Meeting

About 100 young people from Congregational Churches in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio gathered on Saturday, March 11, at the Evangelical Congregational Church of McKeesport. The principal guest speaker was Mrs. Henry David Gray of Hartford, Connecticut, who spoke on "Congregationalism, the Free Churches." In her address Mrs. Gray said, "We visit other Churches and other people to find out what we are ourselves," a thought new to the minds of many of her hearers, and a guide to young people in extending their interests beyond their own Church.

Group meetings were led by Rev. Howard J. Landes, Rev. William Randall, and Rev. Sherwood Kaiser. The afternoon devotional service was led by the visitors from Hartford, followed by a business meeting and recreation. At the evening worship service the newly elected officers were installed by Rev. Howard J. Landes. An illustrated lecture on the 1960 Pilgrim Fellowship Pilgrimage to Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Oberammergau and Russia was presented by the Hartford visitors.

Gratitude for their entertainment was extended by the young people to the host pastor, Dr. John F. C. Green, and the members of the Evangelical Congregational Church. Miss Donna Auberle of First Church, McKeesport, is district Pilgrim Fellowship President.
(Reported by Mrs. William McClusky, Parma, Ohio.)

What Freedom Means to Young People

The adviser of a youth group in one of our National Association Churches invited the members of her group to write on what freedom meant to them. The essays and poems handed in proved to be of great interest, and THE CONGREGATIONALIST is glad to publish two of them.

Under the pen-name of "Elena," one girl wrote:

Freedom — A Feeling

From the earliest times men have sought freedom. Whether called freedom or liberty, we see the same characteristics. But, I often ask myself, "What does it really mean?" Americans are free. They have freedom of press, speech, and religion.

There are times however, in which our own thinking prevents us from seeking this freedom. We do not express orally or on paper our disappointment about something we know to be wrong or when something pleases us a great deal we often keep this pleasure inside because we are afraid to let it go. Often we let someone else direct our religion without knowing ourselves the true meaning of worship.

So perhaps freedom is more than being in a free country or knowing the characteristics behind it. It may be the way we feel towards others and the "liberty" we take with them. Freedom may be the sense of right in our actions. When we believe them to be right we have a clear conscience — it is free. When we believe them to be wrong, we have a guilty conscience and we are not free.

To be free is to know God. When we have a deep sense of peace, calm, love, joy, and understanding we have free minds to live for a Spirit that is great and good.

And so, as with many words, freedom, to me, is a feeling. It is a symbol for the immaterial things we possess in heart and mind. It has great value because it includes everything by which a people lives. It was not made to endure by itself. It will last as long as a person or persons carry its ideals through. Man keeps it going because he has, and always will have, a soul for a free and independent mind.

In poetry a girl who used the pen-name "Lu-Marj" submitted this.

Freedom

We usually think of freedom
In religion, speech, and press.
But what about the freedoms
That are harder to express?

There is freedom in love and honor;
In loyalty, help, and fear.
Freedom in things we cherish
And in friends that we hold dear.

Are we free to do whatever
Our hearts incline us to?
Or are we held back by something
That is faintly "out of view"?

It is hard to find an answer
But one way of finding help
Is to look into the lives of others,
And into *our* hearts as well!

SOUTH CHURCH HONORS PASTOR

Mr. Walter D. Arnold, Senior Deacon of the South Congregational Church of Hartford, Connecticut, reported to the people of that Church through its weekly bulletin of March 26, 1961, that at the March meeting of the Prudential Committee, acting on the suggestion of a great many Church members, and wholly unknown to the pastor, it was voted to name the fellowship hall of the new parish house "The Henry David Gray Fellowship Hall."

The concluding paragraph of the report says, "May this action be an expression of the deep and abiding affection and the reverence in which South Church holds Dr. Gray. We honor him for clarity of wisdom and vision that can inspire and lead his congregation into an ever widening area of Christian Fellowship."

Glorious Independents

Elizabeth Laughton Claxton, Lansing, Michigan

II. ANNE HUTCHINSON

Possibly the word *synod* has an unpleasant, ominous sound for Congregational women because of what transpired at the first assembly of Congregational Churches in this country—called a synod — ordered by the Massachusetts General Court, August 30, 1637, at Newtowne (now Cambridge).

Anne (Mrs. William) Hutchinson, not allowed as a woman to speak in this august gathering, was, nevertheless, the focal point of interest, in that the subjects up for discussion and condemnation were eighty-two "heresies" engendered in the Boston Church. In most minds credit was given Mrs. Hutchinson for these ideas.

To understand Anne Hutchinson, and what happened to her in Boston, one must go back to London where she grew up amid a furore of religious controversy. Her father, Francis Marbury, a prominent Anglican divine, had fought with the bishops, and been forbidden to preach for a number of years. Her mother was one of the Drydens (two generations before the poet), a famous Puritan family.

After her marriage, when Anne moved to Lincolnshire, her good brain demanded a high standard of worship. Her husband being a well-to-do merchant, she had servants to help with the care of her fourteen children, and so had time for thoughts, books, and things spiritual. For years her husband took her the twenty-four miles from their home to St. Botolph's Church in Boston, to hear John Cotton. She appreciated Cotton's sermons and the simple ritual of his services. And then, in 1630, he had to leave suddenly, because of a charge of non-conformity. He went with John Winthrop to America, where he took the position of "Teacher" in the Boston Church there.

Four years later, the Hutchinsons also sailed to new Boston. Here, Anne's knowledge of medicine and household helps brought many needy people to her. She is credited with establishing the first woman's club on this continent, and therein began her trouble with the clergy.

Each week a large group of women met in her home to discuss the sermon of the previous Sunday, delivered by Dr. Wilson, senior minister of First Church. Sometimes the discussion waxed critical. John Cotton was probably embarrassed when it became known that Mrs. Hutchinson claimed that only he and her brother-in-law, Rev. John Wheelwright, were preaching the "covenant of grace" in the Boston area.

The theological controversy grew, assuming political complications, and, finally, through Governor Winthrop, the synod was called. Anne's ideas were all condemned. Wheelwright was exiled. John Cotton proved that his thinking fitted in with that of Dr. Wilson and his fellow clergy. Some call it compromise. He did all he could to help Anne, as a friend. He tried to persuade her to soften her statements.

Of course, it was not the synod that did the final great wrong to Anne. When it failed to silence her, she was tried by the Massachusetts General Court, and excommunicated by the Church.

Anne Hutchinson

After a trip of sixty miles through the spring mud to a new home, following her trial, Anne became ill, and lost the baby due some months later. John Cotton, in a sermon, drew a lesson showing how this misfortune paralleled the error of her thinking.

In spite of the sermon, today, a lovely bronze statue of Anne Marbury Hutchinson stands in front of the State House in Boston. Looking at it, one thinks of the words of Jesus, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

MOTION DENIED IN LAWSUIT

An April 3 Judge Edward J. Dimock of the United States District Court, Southern District of New York, denied the motion made last November by attorneys for the four plaintiff Congregational Churches and ten individuals, to "strike the defense of *Res Judicata.*" The motion had been made on the ground that the defendants had failed to make a prima facie case for a separate trial of *Res Judicata,* that is, had failed to show that the issues involved had been settled in the case of Cadman v. Kenyon.

This motion by Robert C. C. Heaney, Esq., was made when the counsel for defendant General Council, Congregational Boards and Evangelical and Reformed Church had rested their case, and before any evidence or testimony from the plaintiffs had been heard. Had the motion been granted, it would have meant the end of the preliminary trial on that one issue. The denial by Judge Dimock means that the plaintiffs may now proceed with proofs against the defense of *Res Judicata.* No announcement has yet been made as to when the trial will be resumed.

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FROM THE LETTER BOX

Editor, THE CONGREGATIONALIST

Has everyone read the Constitution of his Church recently? Is there a protective clause preventing a mere majority of the members that are present and voting from making ill-advised changes in the government of the Church?

We were a little bit surprised and much pleased that we have such provision in our Constitution. I think that it is standard for Congregational Churches, but of course Constitutions vary.

I believe that a vote of approval of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ would come under this restriction. Here are the Articles in the Constitution of one Church.

Article II — Government and Fellowship

The government of this church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs. It is amenable to no other ecclesiastical body, but it accepts the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation involved in free fellowship of Congregational and Christian Churches, and pledges itself to share their common aims and work.

Article X — Amendments

Section 1. General Amendments

With the exception of any change in Article Two, or any other action which would effect a change in the meaning or spirit of Article Two; this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the *members present and voting* at any annual meeting of the Church, or at any specially called meeting for that purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted in the call, provided that in either case the proposed amendment shall have been read before the Church at a Sunday service at least two weeks before the proposed change is to be made.

Section 2. Exceptions

No action shall be made in Article Two or any other action taken which would effect a change in the meaning or spirit of Article Two except at an annual meeting, and then by a two-thirds vote of *all members of the church entitled to vote;* said proposed change having been laid before the Church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed change, and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next preceding such proposed change.

Oneida, Illinois SIDNEY V. HOLT

(Since this letter was received, the Editor has received word of the death of Mr. Holt. The letter is published with the permission of Mrs. Holt.)

Connecticut Young Man Receives Award

Bruce R. Alexander of Hartford, Connecticut, an officer of the National Association Pilgrim Fellowship, and a future minister, has been awarded a scholarship from the Jacob L. Fox Foundation, based on character, ability and reverence for God.

Loyal Congregational Column Grows

Since our April issue went to press, word has been received that the following Churches have voted not to approve the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, and not to join that body. (Churches whose names are preceded by an asterisk are National Association members.)

California: *Anaheim; *Lawndale, Community. **Connecticut:** Glastonbury, Buckingham; Montville Center; Wapping. **Illinois:** Chicago, Stewart Ridge; Godfrey, Melville Union. **Kansas:** Maize. **Maine:** East Machias; Machiasport; Winthrop. **Massachusetts:** *Chicopee Falls; *Cummington, West; South Ashburnham, People's Evangelical. **Michigan:** *Frankfort; Otsego. **Minnesota:** *Bayport, People's; Mantorville. **New Hampshire:** Wolfeboro, Christian. **New Jersey:** *Egg Harbor City, Emmanuel. **Ohio:** *Bowling Green, Plain. **Pennsylvania:** *McKeesport, First; Johnstown, First; *Wilkes-Barre, Puritan. **Rhode Island:** *West Warwick, Riverpoint. **Wisconsin:** *Beloit, First; Pine River.

A Correction: The Church at Hudson, Michigan, was erroneously reported as having voted *No.* This Church has resolved to take no action for three years. Errors or omissions noted in this list should be promptly reported to the Editor so that corrections can be made.

Churches which have voted *No* but are not now members of the National Association are invited to consider joining it. The Executive Secretary's column in this isssue is concerned with this subject.

Recent Additional Reports

Since the above list of new *No*-voting Churches was printed, reports have come of three more, all of them in New England. They are: *Massachusetts:* Cambridge, Prospect. *New Hampshire:* Ossipee, Second; Troy, First.

Out of 228 Churches listed in the Congregational Christian Year Book for 1959, as having 1000 or more members each, 12 are known to have voted *No* thus far.

OUR COVER PICTURE

"Reading the Scriptures," an old print rarely found today, may well remind us of the source of strength in the spiritual life of the generations which made our country great. The upsurge of interest in new translations of the Bible, together with the fact that 1961 is the 350th anniversary of the well-beloved King James Version, makes this suitable for our thinking now. The revival of genuine spiritual life which is so much needed in all Churches may well begin if the everyday members of them all will take to heart the verse printed below the title: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life and they are they which testify of me."